

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP

WATERTOWN, N.Y.
TIMES

E. 42,859

MAY 5 1965

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

ABEL AND POWERS AGAIN.

While it may seem odd, the names of Russian Col. Rudolph Abel, arrested in the United States as a Soviet spy, and Francis Gary Powers of American U-2 reconnaissance plane fame, have popped up in the news again. And almost simultaneously, too.

Moscow television announced Tuesday, for the first time, that Abel was honored by the Russian government back in 1962 following the prisoner exchange involving him and Powers. In this announcement the Russians made a rare public admission—that Abel served as a Soviet spy and was decorated for it.

It was further revealed that Abel was responsible for providing Soviet intelligence with reports on the impending Nazi attack in 1941; that he had served in the Russian secret service since 1927; and in the opinion of the Soviet government, he was a man of "integrity, honesty, profound love of country, moral purity, courage and staunchness."

The occasion for this announcement about Abel was rather odd, too. The disclosure came on a TV program devoted to honoring the 20th anniversary of victory over the Nazi invaders.

It will be recalled that Abel was arrested in Brooklyn June 21, 1957, and charged with heading a Soviet spy ring which for eleven years transmitted military and atomic energy secrets to Moscow. On Nov. 15, 1957, after a trial in which he did not testify, Abel was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Powers entered the picture two and a half years later. His U-2 plane was downed over Russia on May 1, 1960. And a summit conference in Paris at the time collapsed when the then premier Nikita S. Khrushchev stormed out of a meeting with the then President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Powers, sentenced to ten years, was imprisoned in Russia for two years. Then, on Feb. 10, 1962, came the exchange of Powers for Abel. Powers, returned to the United States and in October, 1962, became a test pilot for Lockheed Aviation in California. A short time later he divorced his wife, Barbara, and in October, 1963, married the former Mrs. Claudia Edwards Downey, an ex-employee of the top-secret Central Intelligence Agency for which Powers flew his U-2 missions.

Now it becomes known that the Central Intelligence Agency awarded Powers a medal in a super-secret ceremony two weeks ago at the C.I.A.'s headquarters in Alexandria, Va.

And this is where two more questions arise: Why did the C.I.A. wait five years, if it wanted to give Powers a citation. Why can't Powers wear his medal?

That's right. Powers is not supposed to wear the medal and is not supposed to tell anybody about it.

Why? From the earliest times service of all kinds has been rewarded by honors and distinctions. In the third century B.C. Jonathan, the high priest, successfully led the Jews in battle thereby aiding Alexander, who "sent to Jonathan, and

gave testimony of his worth, and gave him honorary rewards, as a golden button, which it is the custom to give king's kinsmen."

And the earliest medal in existence struck for an Englishman for service is that awarded to John Kendal in 1480.

Military men have always proudly worn their medals. Civilians, too, cited for exceptional deeds, are in the same category. Why, then, does Francis Gary Powers have to keep his medal hidden in a box?